THE HISTORY OF

ROCK

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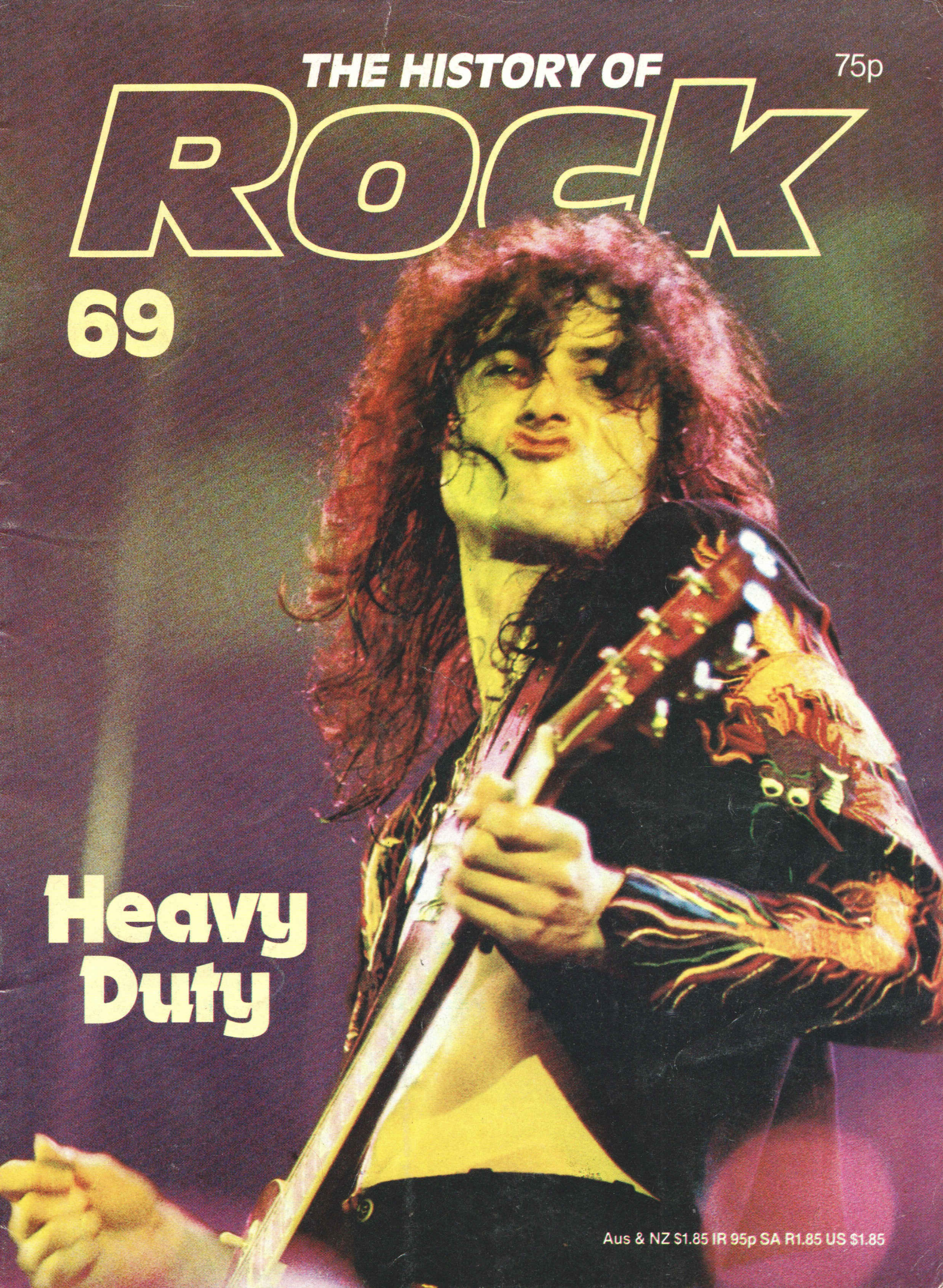

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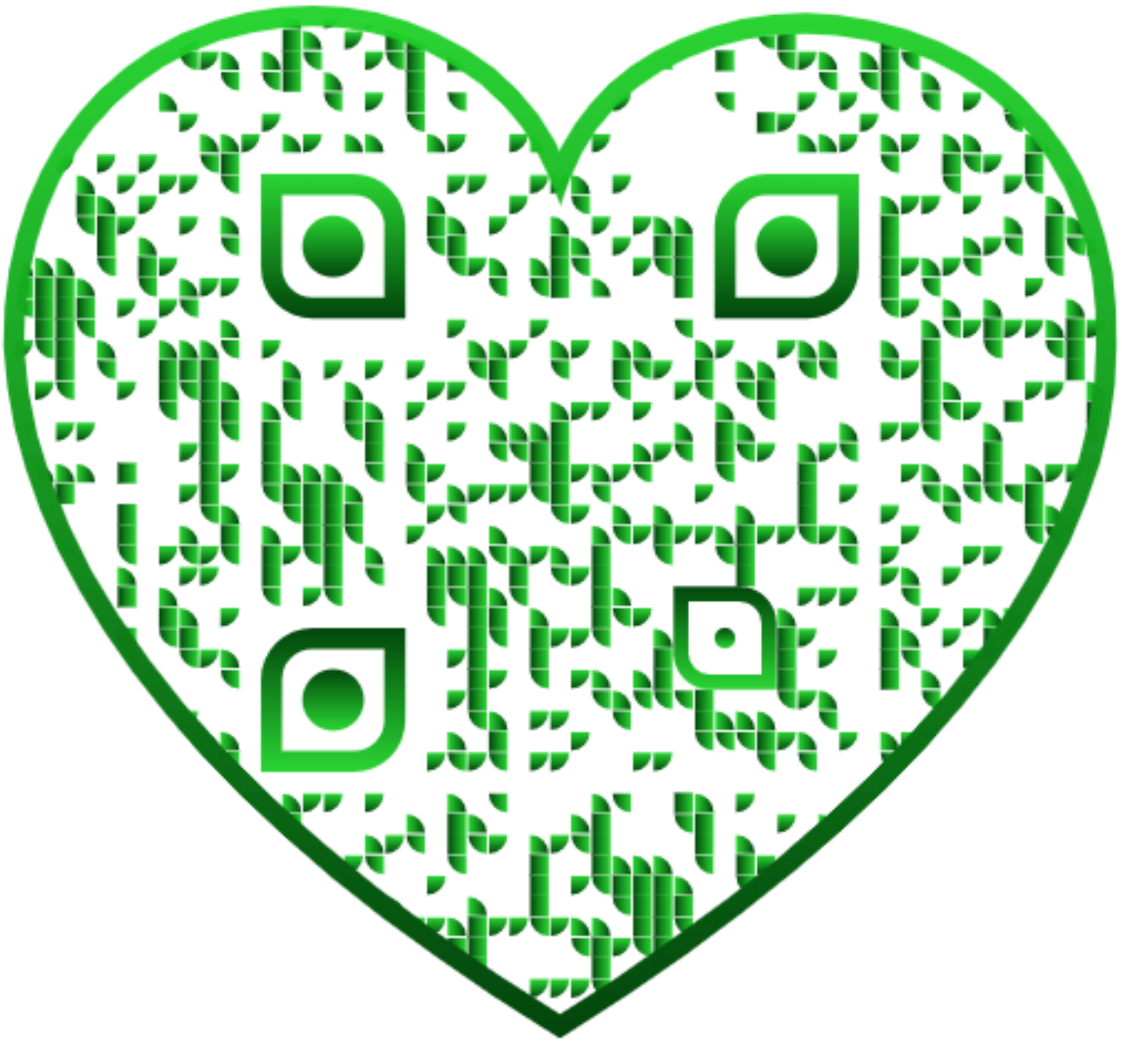

THE HISTORY OF ROCK

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Hard Times

Stripping rock down to the basics produced a durable new style

Above left: Deep Purple guitarist Ritchie Blackmore. In many ways an archetypal heavy-rock guitarist, Blackmore went on to form his own band Rainbow.

As the sense of solidarity of the hippie era faded with the Sixties, the rock audience split into separate – and often strongly opposed – factions. Many of the older listeners acquired a taste for the mellower sounds of the singer-songwriters, the early teens went for the bright pop of T. Rex or the Sweet, while the group in-between opted for heavy rock. This hard and sometimes aggressive music was a million miles away from the acoustic whimsy of flower-power or progressive rock's lyrical intellectualism.

Cream and Jimi Hendrix had shown the way, forcing simple blues scales through a barrage of feedback over pounding bass guitar and drums to create a new, powerful blues based on electric sound. The blues boom of the Sixties, which had produced bands like Ten Years After, had ensured that there were thousands of young guitarists accomplished in white urban blues throughout Britain and America. (Not that they confined themselves to playing 12-bar blues, but their music *was* firmly based on the traditional blues scales with flattened thirds and sevenths.)

One such guitarist was Jimmy Page, a precocious young session musician who had filled the departing Jeff Beck's shoes in the Yardbirds. Out of the ashes of that group, he formed Led Zeppelin, one of the bands which was to dominate the Seventies with their powerful brand of riff-based blues-rock and moody, mythical folk.

Black magic was one of the regular trappings of heavy metal. If Page was genuinely obsessed by it, purchasing Aleister Crowley's Scottish castle, Black Sabbath exploited it more fully as a theatrical device, donning crucifixes to complement their sinister, brooding music and general air of malevolent mysticism. Deep Purple, too, dabbled with occult imagery in songs like 'Mandrake Root' and Devil's Eye'.

Metal magic

Led Zeppelin, with their technical sophistication and their lingering identification with hippie preoccupations like drugs and the Orient, appealed to a massive and varied audience on both sides of the Atlantic. But they had one foot firmly planted in what was to become the heavy-metal subculture – a large if isolated community of music fans, who also provided Black Sabbath and Deep Purple with Top Ten hits and a very comfortable living. (Zeppelin, true to the 'progressive rock' ethos, refused to release singles in the UK.)

This massive tribe, clad for the most part in bedraggled denim, was mainly young and male. For the machismo of singers like Ian Gillan and Ozzy Osbourne seemed to appeal more to their own sex – as a model to aspire to – than to women. The ideals of the Sixties freaks were, to a large extent, the preserve of a middle-class intelligentsia, and seemed far removed from the experience of the young of the early Seventies. Ozzy Osbourne's cheerful pessimism and celebration of manhood mocked the peace and love optimism of the hippies. That optimism was now *establishment*, and since rock identifies with the rebel not the cause, it had become redundant.

NEVILLE WIGGINS

PRECIOUS METAL

How Led Zeppelin turned heavy riffs to gold discs

LED ZEPPELIN were one of the most successful bands of the Seventies – or indeed of any rock era. Their powerful blend of post-Cream, post-Hendrix heavy metal and acoustic-folk mysticism provided a heady soundtrack for the decline and fall of the hippie dream.

As the remnants of the associated counter-culture drifted away from politics towards a Tolkien-inspired romanticism, Led Zeppelin conjured a vision of mist-shrouded towers and a (conveniently mythical) search for the One Truth: 'And it's whispered that soon/If we all call the tune/Then the piper will lead us to reason/And a new day will dawn/For those who stand long/And the forests will echo with laughter' ('Stairway To Heaven').

Led Zeppelin (left) transformed rock economics. Their phenomenally successful music and the business acumen of manager Peter Grant (below, celebrating with his boys) turned all their records gold.

The brainchild of a seasoned session man and a hard-headed showbiz hustler, Led Zeppelin were run with an icy, and at times ruthless professionalism. Others may have exerted a greater influence on the development of rock music, but when it came to business Led Zeppelin rewrote the rule book. When they signed to Atlantic Records, the band not only acquired the largest advance ever given to a new act – without the label even having seen them perform – they got total control over everything from record production to merchandise marketing.

Zeppelin successfully capitalised on the underground, FM-radio-oriented circuit that had built up around progressive rock in the late Sixties, and were the first to exploit its commercial potential to the full. They pioneered the route to success through constant touring and word of mouth, which has since become almost standard for heavy-rock bands. Before Led Zeppelin, it was generally assumed that bands needed hit singles to make big money. Zeppelin had only one Top Ten single in the States, and never released a single in the UK. When Atlantic pleaded

with them to put out 'Whole Lotta Love' in the UK, Zeppelin refused and watched the album sell like a single instead. And, by forming their own production and publishing companies and using their position to dictate terms to concert promoters, Led Zeppelin managed to keep a large proportion of the money they generated for themselves.

The professionals

The break-up of the Yardbirds in July 1968 had left guitarist Jimmy Page and manager Peter Grant with the defunct band's name and little else. James Patrick Page (born 9 January 1944 at Heston, Middlesex) had been one of the Sixties' top young session players. A former art student, he was well-versed in the early rock classics, having learned studiously from Scotty Moore's guitar breaks on Elvis Presley's early recordings and from James Burton's solos on Ricky Nelson records. Page played sessions for many rock groups, including the Who, the Kinks (his guitar-work being prominent on 'You Really Got Me'), Jeff Beck, the Rolling Stones and even top MOR artists like Tom Jones. He was also an experienced producer, arranger and composer, having fulfilled all these roles at Andrew Loog Oldham's Immediate label with artists like Nico, Fleur de Lys and even John Mayall and Eric Clapton (who, like Page, had passed through the ranks of the Yardbirds).

Grant was equally seasoned. A former sheet-metal worker, bit-part actor and bouncer, he had been a tour manager for Little Eva, Chuck Berry and Gene Vincent, and manager for the Animals and the Nashville Teens before taking hold of the Yardbirds' business affairs.

The Yardbirds and Page enjoyed some cult status in the US but at the time of their break-up meant little in the UK, where they had not had a hit for over two years. Undeterred by this, Page wasted little time in putting a new line-up together. His first recruit was John Paul Jones (born John Baldwin, 3 January 1946), a bassist, organist and arranger whom Page knew from his session days.

Page's first choices for vocalist and drummer, Terry Reid and B. J. Wilson, were both unavailable. Reid suggested a young singer called Robert Plant (born 20 August 1948), who had spent his teens scuffling around the Midlands with various blues and R&B outfits and had come down to London looking for a break. Page and Grant caught up with him at a teacher-training-college dance, where he was appearing in a group called Hobbstweedle before a small, uninterested audience. Both guitarist and manager were, however, suitably impressed.

The final piece of the jigsaw came at Plant's recommendation. His earlier bands had included the Crawling King Snakes and the Band of Joy, both of which boasted the talents of John Bonham (born 31 May 1949), a drummer whose volume and aggression had earned him a considerable reputation with Midlands club-goers. Bonham was enjoying lucrative session work for the first time and was initially reluctant to join, but agreed after considerable persuasion.

Left: Led Zeppelin's powerful sound was ideally suited to the vast outdoor venues of the US circuit. Below: At Knebworth, 1979, large video screens projected the band's movements and expressions.

Zeppelin lifts off

Rehearsals began in September at Page's London flat. Legend claims that the first number they ever played was 'Train Kept A-Rollin', a Yardbirds number that became a regular stage favourite. The rest of the repertoire consisted of new material that Page had been writing, together with old blues and R&B tunes. According to Plant: 'You just couldn't walk away and forget it. The sound was so great.'

Within three weeks the band were off on a 10-day Scandinavian tour, fulfilling contractual obligations as the New Yardbirds. They also did a few early UK dates under this name, the last being at Liverpool University on 19 October 1968, before renaming themselves Led Zeppelin. The name had been thought up by Keith Moon and John Entwistle when they were thinking of leaving the Who. It had originally been spelled Lead Zeppelin, but Grant realised that this might be mispronounced.

At first, the name-change proved a liability. Even after they had recorded their first album and signed with Atlantic, interest in the UK was hardly overwhelming. It was as much as Grant could do to get them occasional club, pub or small college dates, and even then they were usually billed as 'ex-Yardbirds'.

Success came first in the States. Led Zeppelin made their US debut in Denver on Boxing Day 1968, and went on to support Vanilla Fudge and Iron Butterfly, America's top hard-rock bands. Both these outfits were, to use the phrase of the day, 'blown off the stage' by Zeppelin. Peter Grant's experience in the States with the Yardbirds and the Animals had enabled him to plan the tour for maximum impact, taking in those cities and venues with the highest media profile and the best audiences. By the time Led Zeppelin flew home at the end of February, they were a headline attraction and their LP was racing up the US charts.

Recorded in the autumn of 1968 for a mere £1782 before their Atlantic deal had been finalised, the album *Led Zeppelin* went on to gross over £3½ million by 1975. Produced by Jimmy Page (as were all their subsequent albums), it welded electric blues, acoustic folk and fuzzed, feedback-drenched heavy rock into a startling whole. Musically, it set the format for most of Led Zeppelin's subsequent output. Another precedent it introduced, however, was its wholesale use of time-honoured riffs and lyrics, previously used by blues artists like Howlin' Wolf and Albert King, in songs credited to Page and Plant alone.

The album wasn't released in the UK until the end of March, when the band were halfway through a nationwide tour. At the time, they were playing tiny clubs on this tour for as little as £60 a night. Nevertheless, word of their American triumphs was filtering back and, helped by a batch of rave reviews in the UK rock press, the album was in the Top Ten when the tour finished in mid-April.

Having cracked it on both sides of the Atlantic in record time, Zeppelin spent the next year consolidating that position. In those 12 months they visited the US no fewer than four times, culminating in a prestige date at New York's Carnegie Hall, and did two tours of major British halls, plus a one-off appearance at London's Lyceum Ballroom.

Amid this intense activity, the second album was being written in hotel rooms and recorded in various studios over a period of several months. The result was *Led Zeppelin II*, a frenetic burst of heavy rock. 'Whole Lotta Love' (another uncredited reworking, this time of Willie Dixon's 'You Need Love'), edited down to a single in the US, was a smash hit and became a heavy-metal classic. Released in October 1969, the album topped the charts in both the UK and US: it displaced the Beatles' *Abbey Road* as Number 1 and stayed in the *Billboard* Top Two Hundred for 18 months.

Back to nature

May 1970 saw the band take a break from their relentless touring. Page and Plant went off to a cottage in the Welsh mountains for a holiday, where they composed a number of new, rurally-inspired songs. Page's interest in folk came to the fore on this set, as did Robert Plant's love of laid-back, West Coast music. Although it contained a few heavy rockers, like the crashing 'Immigrant Song', *Led Zeppelin III* disappointed both critics and fans with its emphasis on acoustic material. Despite huge advance orders, it ended up selling less well than its predecessors.

The band's response was to sever their already tenuous ties with the press almost completely. Compared with other acts of the same commercial stature, Led Zeppelin had always been relatively unknown outside the world of rock music. Even among their fans, the individual band members remained virtual enigmas. Robert Plant's love of home life on his Worcestershire farm; Bonham's fondness for alcohol and fast cars; Page's interest in the occult – these were the snippets with which fans had to content themselves.

Whether by accident or design, this created a mystique which did Zeppelin's career prospects no harm at all. From 1970 through to the end of 1973, regular tours round Britain and across North America sold out with a minimum of promotion, as did visits to new venues in Europe, Australasia and the Far East. Each year, members of the band topped popularity polls in the world's music journals, both collectively and individually, while their increasingly infrequent album releases continued to be landmarks in the rock calendar.

Climbing the Stairway

In November 1971 their fourth album – officially untitled but commonly known as 'Led Zeppelin IV' – confirmed the broader musical direction of the previous album. It was to become the band's most consistent seller around the world, thanks largely to the inclusion of 'Stairway To Heaven', the song that – building from a gentle acoustic ballad to a blazing hard-rock finale – brought mass acceptance for the softer aspects of Zeppelin's music and replaced 'Whole Lotta Love' as their anthem.

The next album gave Zeppelin's critics a stationary target to aim at. Released in March 1973, *Houses Of The Holy* contained little of the heavy blues-rock on which Zeppelin had been founded, and a couple of tongue-in-cheek spoofs. Even some of their staunchest supporters had doubts about it, though it followed the other Zeppelin albums to the top of the world's charts. As if to refute their detractors, Zeppelin made that summer's American jaunt their biggest yet. Stretching from the first week in May to the end of July, it broke attendance records from the very first date, when over 50,000 people filled the Atlanta Braves Stadium, and grossed Zeppelin over 4½ million dollars.

Some of the proceeds from the tour were spent filming a few of the later concerts for a planned Led Zeppelin movie. Work continued on their return from the States, with all four band members plus Peter Grant shooting individual fantasy sequences intended to symbolise each man's character. All the footage had been shot by the end of 1973, but three more years were to pass before the public had a chance to see the film. This was to be indicative of Zeppelin's pace of working from this point onwards.

1974 saw a dearth of live concerts and record releases. Instead of playing and recording, Zeppelin were laying the foundations of Swan Song, the record label they formed when their Atlantic contract expired. This included launching the label with lavish parties in New York, Los Angeles and Chislehurst Caves; getting involved with their new signings, who included Bad Company (initially in the US only), Maggie Bell and the Pretty Things; and recording their first Swan Song album, to be distributed by Atlantic.

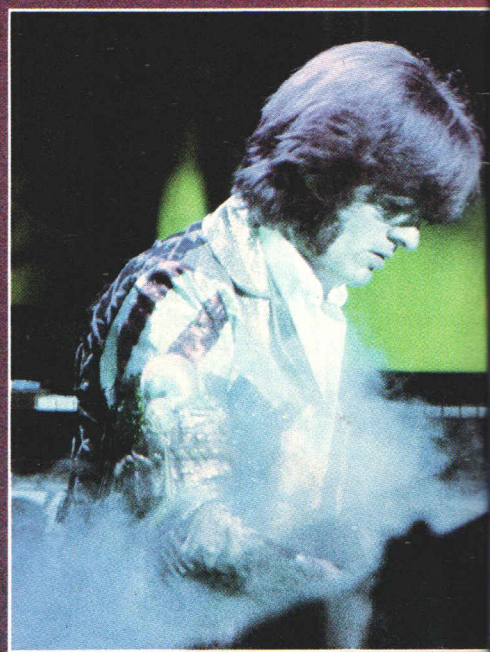
This album, in typical Zeppelin style, was delayed for several months while final mixing and sleeve artwork were perfected, finally coming out in March 1975 at the end of the band's tenth American tour. The tour demonstrated that the band had lost none of their popularity during the 18-month lay-off, while the album, *Physical Graffiti*, proved to be well worth the wait.

A double album, combining recordings from the previous year with half-a-dozen songs left over from previous albums, *Physical Graffiti* was an impressive indication of how far Zeppelin had developed in their six years together. There was plenty of the hard rock that some fans felt had been missing from Zeppelin's later work. Frantic rockers like 'Night Flight' and 'Custard Pie' rubbed shoulders with gentle acoustic excursions like 'Bron-Y-Aur' or the post-psychedelic grandeur of 'Kashmir'; both critics and fans approved, while the tour pulled all six Led Zeppelin albums into the American charts simultaneously.

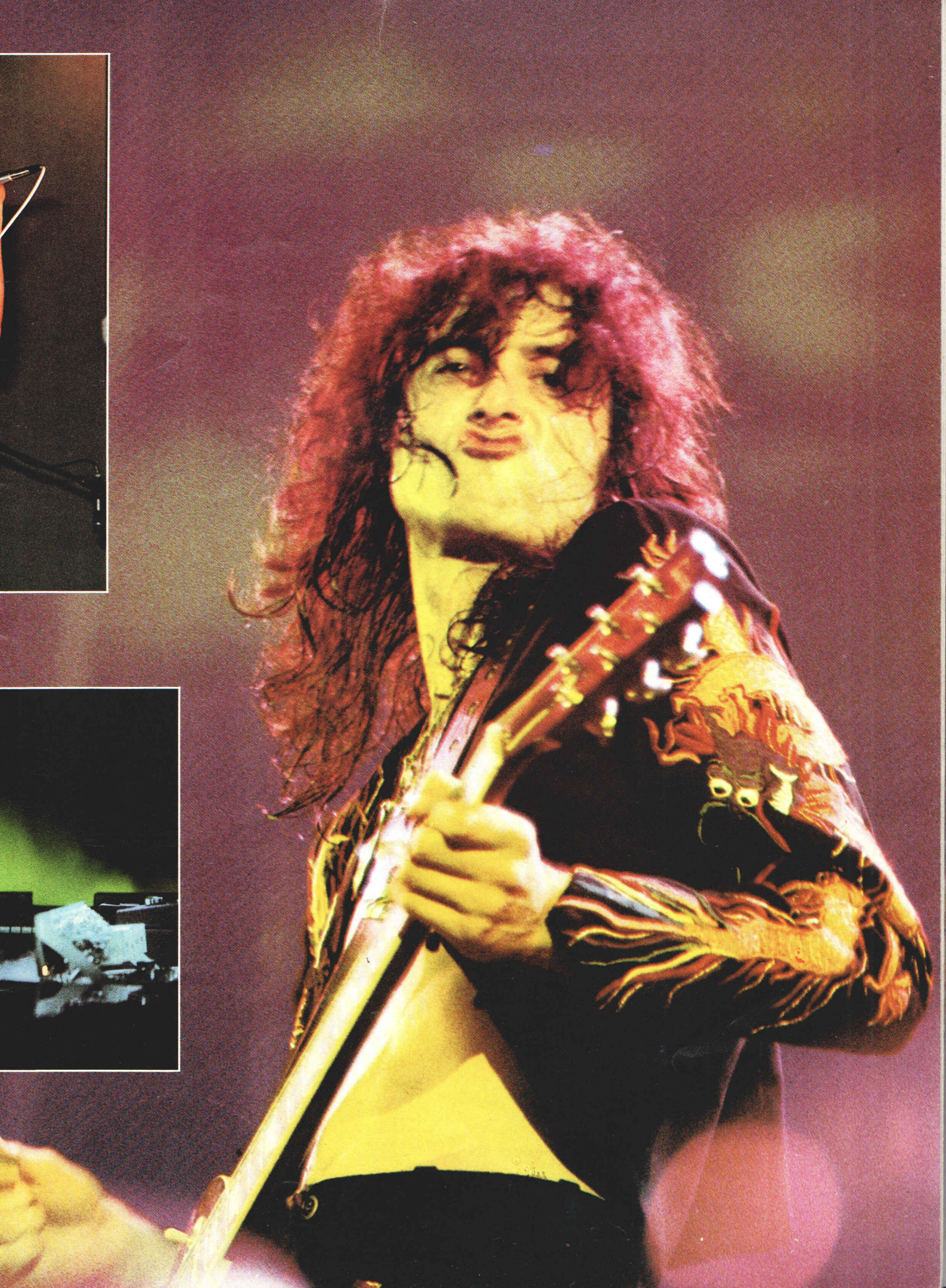
Crash landing

From then on, however, things started to take a turn for the worse. That August, Robert Plant and his wife were seriously injured in a car crash on the Greek island of Rhodes, forcing the band to cancel their planned US tour. During Plant's recuperation, a new album was recorded at Munich's Musicland Studios, but its release was held up, with the artwork once again the source of delay. Prior to its appearance in April 1976, Page and Plant had both gone out of their way to make clear in interviews just how much the coming LP meant to Zeppelin, so there was some disappointment when *Presence* turned out to be a generally uninspired, if thoroughly competent effort. It boasted one classic, the driving 10-minute rocker 'Achilles Last Stand'. UK sales hinted that Zeppelin's popularity might be starting to wane, but no such question arose in the States, where *Presence* became the first album ever to go platinum on advance orders alone.

In October 1976 the long-awaited movie finally got its premiere, accompanied by a



Right: James Patrick Page Esq., gentleman landowner, dabbler in the black arts of the occult and a fantastically influential guitar stylist. He has maintained a presence that is as enigmatic off-stage as flamboyant on-stage. Inset above right: Robert Plant, R&B screamer extraordinaire. Inset right: The phantom of the opera – John Paul Jones, shrouded in dry ice, at the organ.



double album of the soundtrack. Described by Peter Grant as 'the most expensive home-movie ever made', *The Song Remains The Same* was decidedly amateurish as a piece of film-making and didn't even catch the band in particularly inspired live form. But it did at least give people the chance to see Zeppelin in action, and was a predictable success, grossing over 200,000 dollars in its first week alone in the States.

Back in action

The band embarked on a massive American tour in April 1977, an enterprise originally planned for February but postponed because Plant had had tonsillitis. Stretching through to mid August, it was to take in 51 dates and reach an audience of over 1,300,000 fans. For nearly four months, everything went well; the concerts were a great success, the band were apparently enjoying being back in action, and the spectacular effects – smoke bombs, video screens and synchronised lasers – worked perfectly. Then, within the space of five days, the whole thing collapsed.

At a concert in Oakland, Bonham, Grant and two of the Led Zeppelin entourage were arrested after they beat up two of tour promoter Bill Graham's staff, one of whom was hospitalised. They were bailed out (and later found guilty and given fines and suspended prison sentences) and proceeded to New Orleans, where worse news reached them. On 26 July, Robert Plant's five-year-old son Karac fell ill with a stomach complaint and died on his way to hospital the next day. Plant flew home immediately and the rest of the tour was cancelled.

Below: John Bonham was for many people the heavy-rock drummer. Crashing his way around an enormous kit, which even included orchestral timpani, he made his mark in numbers like 'Moby Dick' and 'Four Sticks'.

Rumours circulated about the band's future, and it was widely held that Jimmy Page's dabblings in the occult were responsible for their troubles. Page gave a series of interviews denying the rumours. Apart from some rehearsals at Clearwell Castle in the Forest of Dean in May 1978, however, Led Zeppelin did not work together again until the end of that year when they went into Abba's Stockholm studio to cut a new album. The result was *In Through The Out Door*, which appeared in August 1979.

The out door

During those two years of silence, the UK music scene had been almost totally revolutionised by the arrival of punk, and Led Zeppelin, with their guitar solos, tax-exile lifestyle and massive tours (with attendant hotel-wrecking, wild parties and groupie scene), had come to symbolise everything that the punks said was wrong with the old rock. The two concerts Led Zeppelin played at Knebworth in August 1979 sold well enough, but poorly in comparison to the band's days of glory. *In Through The Out Door* reached Number 1 in the LP charts, but had dropped out of the Top Twenty by the end of October. It was a different story in the States, where the album stayed at the top of the charts for a record seven weeks and went on to sell over four million copies, despite Zeppelin's absence from their shores.

A short, low-key tour of Europe in June 1980 went well enough to persuade the band to embark on another US tour. But, during rehearsals at Jimmy Page's home in Windsor, John Bonham was found dead in his bed after a lengthy drinking session. A subsequent inquest recorded a verdict of accidental death. The tributes from fellow musicians poured in, and the rumours of a possible replacement abounded, but on 4 December, Swan Song issued a short statement announcing that Led Zeppelin would not be continuing.

Robert Plant made a solo album, *Pictures At Eleven*, which did well, especially in America, while Jimmy Page composed the soundtrack for the film *Death Wish II*. John Paul Jones, meanwhile, managed to reduce his once-low profile to the point of invisibility. There has also been one more Led Zeppelin album, a collection of previously unreleased songs. Its title, *Coda*, suggests that this particular chapter of the history of rock has definitely come to an end.

PAUL KENDALL

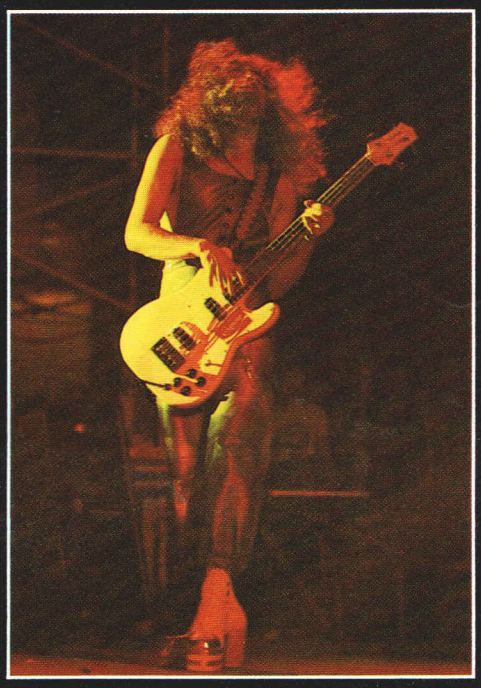
LED ZEPPELIN
Discography

Albums

Led Zeppelin (Atlantic 588171, 1969); *Led Zeppelin II* (Atlantic 588198, 1969); *Led Zeppelin III* (Atlantic 2401 002, 1970); *Led Zeppelin IV* (Atlantic 2401 012, 1971); *Houses Of The Holy* (Atlantic K 50014, 1973); *Physical Graffiti* (Swan Song SSK 89400, 1975); *Presence* (Swan Song SSK 59402, 1976); *The Song Remains The Same* (Swan Song SSK 89402, 1976); *In Through The Out Door* (Swan Song SSK 59410, 1979); *Coda* (Swan Song A 0051, 1982).

CHILDREN of the GRAVE

Black Sabbath: idols of an occult following?



'Finished with my woman/'Cos she couldn't help me/With my mind': Ozzy strangles the microphone (below) while Geezer pounds out the bass riff (above).

BLACK SABBATH are the archetypal heavy metal band, the blueprint for countless imitators that sprang up in the late Seventies. While Deep Purple had pseudo-classical pretensions and Led Zeppelin indulged in post-hippie mysticism, Sabbath blended down-to-earth heavy rock with highly theatrical occult imagery. Their menacing presence, aided and abetted on stage by the manic leaps of singer Ozzy Osbourne, provided an aggressive contrast to late Sixties flower-power. It also established a musical formula, which would, with time, come to seem restrictive, and lead to serious disagreements within the band.

The four original members – guitarist Tony Iommi (born 19 February 1948), drummer Bill Ward (born 5 May 1948), bassist Geezer Butler (born 17 July 1949) and singer Ozzy Osbourne (born 3 December 1948) – left the same Birmingham school together in 1968 to form a group called Earth. Playing a jazz-blues fusion, they gigged continuously in Birmingham and Hamburg, where they broke the Beatles' house record at the Star Club. Despite their cult following, they became frustrated by their lack of international success. Under the guidance of their first manager Jim Simpson, they changed their name in 1969 to Black Sabbath (the title of one of their early songs), increased the volume and adopted a suitably macabre image.

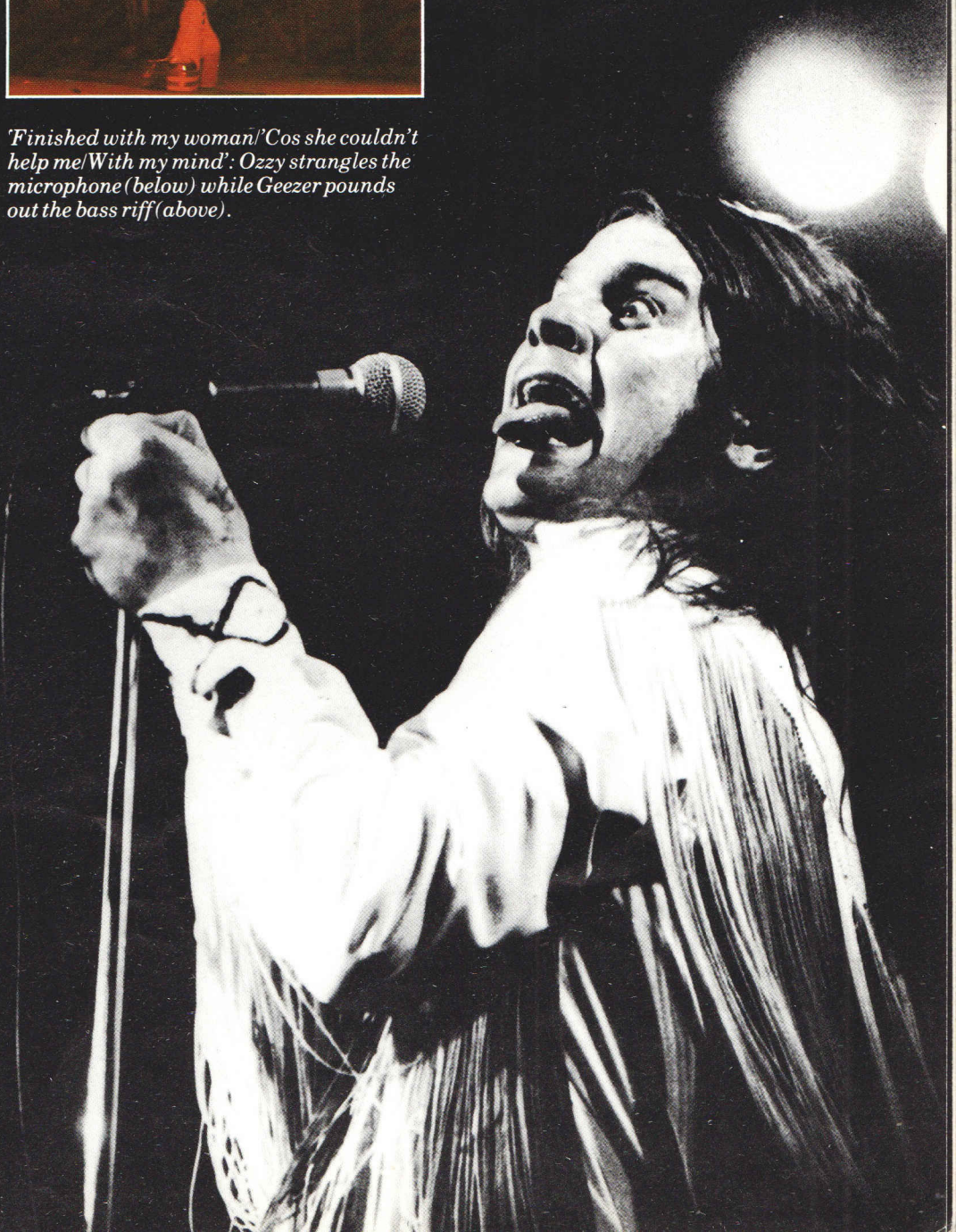
Paranoid and paranormal

They continued touring the club circuit in Britain and Germany, and released a one-off single on Fontana. The same cut – 'Evil Woman' – became their first single on Vertigo Records in March 1970. Their first LP, *Black Sabbath*, was released simultaneously. Recorded in two days at a cost of £600, it reflected their adherence to rock basics, although overdubbed sound effects – pattering rain, doom-laden church bells – added the required 'occult' flavour. Heavily promoted for its association with the paranormal, tenuous as it was, the album achieved a three-month stay in the UK charts.

Maintaining their momentum, the band returned to the studio to record what was to become their classic single, 'Paranoid', and the album of the same name. Released together in September 1970, these records confirmed the band's domestic popularity. 'Paranoid' reached Number 4 in the UK chart and also won interest for the band in the US. Embarking on a university tour there in the autumn of 1970, Ozzy and the band consolidated the strong impression they had made on American hard-rock fans. The quick success of both LP and single surprised both the band and their record company, with the album eventually clocking up a 65-week stay in the *Billboard* chart.

Sabbath under strain

Sabbath went on to extend their popularity by maintaining a gruelling worldwide touring schedule throughout the early Seventies. Their behaviour on the road and in hotels conformed to heavy rock traditions – room-wrecking, groupie and drinking binges, and so on. Ozzy in particular appeared to be interested only in alcohol and hectic rock music, drawing his energy from the rapport he created with his increasingly dedicated following. The *Master Of Reality* LP (1971) and *Black Sabbath 4* (1972) earned Black Sabbath worldwide



recognition, but it was *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath* (1973) that finally achieved an ideal fusion of the band's live energy and the crushing, oppressive weight of their doomy songs.

Success brought its problems for Black Sabbath. They had parted company from their original manager Jim Simpson, replacing him first with Patrick Meehan and then with Don Arden. Now they found themselves on the receiving end of accusations of contract-breaking from Simpson, and Ozzy Osbourne was handed a subpoena as he walked on stage at an American date in 1975.

As a result of these wrangles, Black Sabbath attempted to manage themselves. Since they were then writing and recording an album a year and undertaking a punishing tour schedule – including their debut at New York's prestigious Madison Square Gardens in July 1975 – the strain began to tell. Ozzy was drinking heavily, and personality conflicts were developing within the band.

Ozzy's insistence that the band live up to his hard-drinking, hard-living image was beginning to concern the other members, while on a musical level, Tony Iommi's increasing interest in more complex arrangements was alienating Ozzy, who preferred a basic approach. *Sabotage*, released in September 1975, adhered to the basic heavy-rock formula, but the sessions for *Technical Ecstasy* the following year saw Iommi experimenting with overdubbing and even, in Ozzy's absence, a horn section. Ozzy drew away from the other members of the band, and in 1977 he left Black Sabbath, only to rejoin a year later, ousting his temporary replacement, former Savoy Brown singer Dave Walker. Ozzy and Black Sabbath cut one more album together, *Never Say Die*, in 1979, but the ill-feeling remained and Ozzy departed in a flurry of insults to launch his solo project, Blizzard of Oz.

Ozzy goes bats

Ozzy's departure deprived the band of their front man, one who went on to develop even higher peaks of the macabre, appearing covered in fake blood, in only a loincloth and reputedly biting the heads off live bats. He took with him a sizeable portion of Black Sabbath's audience, for whom he had always been the focal point. His albums *Blizzard Of Oz* (1980) and *Diary Of A Madman* (1982) were remarkably successful, particularly in the States, where the latter remained on the *Billboard* charts for over a year.

The remaining members of Black Sabbath, meanwhile, recruited former Rainbow vocalist Ronnie James Dio. Bill Ward retired for health reasons, to be replaced behind the drumkit by Vinnie Appice, younger brother of former Vanilla Fudge drummer Carmine Appice. (Geezer Butler also left briefly but returned to the fold soon afterwards.) Dio resisted the temptation to imitate Ozzy's style, stamping his own personality on the two studio LPs, *Heaven And Hell* (1980) and *Mob Rules* (1981). Acrimony persisted between Ozzy and the band, especially after the release in 1980 of *Sabbath, Live At Last*, which featured recordings made before the split. (Ozzy still laid claim to much of the Sabbath catalogue, using the old numbers in his act and on a live album.)

Tension was developing between Dio and the other members of Black Sabbath over his dominant role in the group, with Iommi alleging that Dio had tampered with the mixes of *Live Evil* (1982) to make his vocals more prominent. In November 1982 they split with Dio, who took drummer Vinnie Appice with him to form a new band, entitled Dio. At the same time Butler and Iommi, dissatisfied with the efforts of Sandy Pearlman, who had become their manager, signed a deal with their old boss Don Arden.

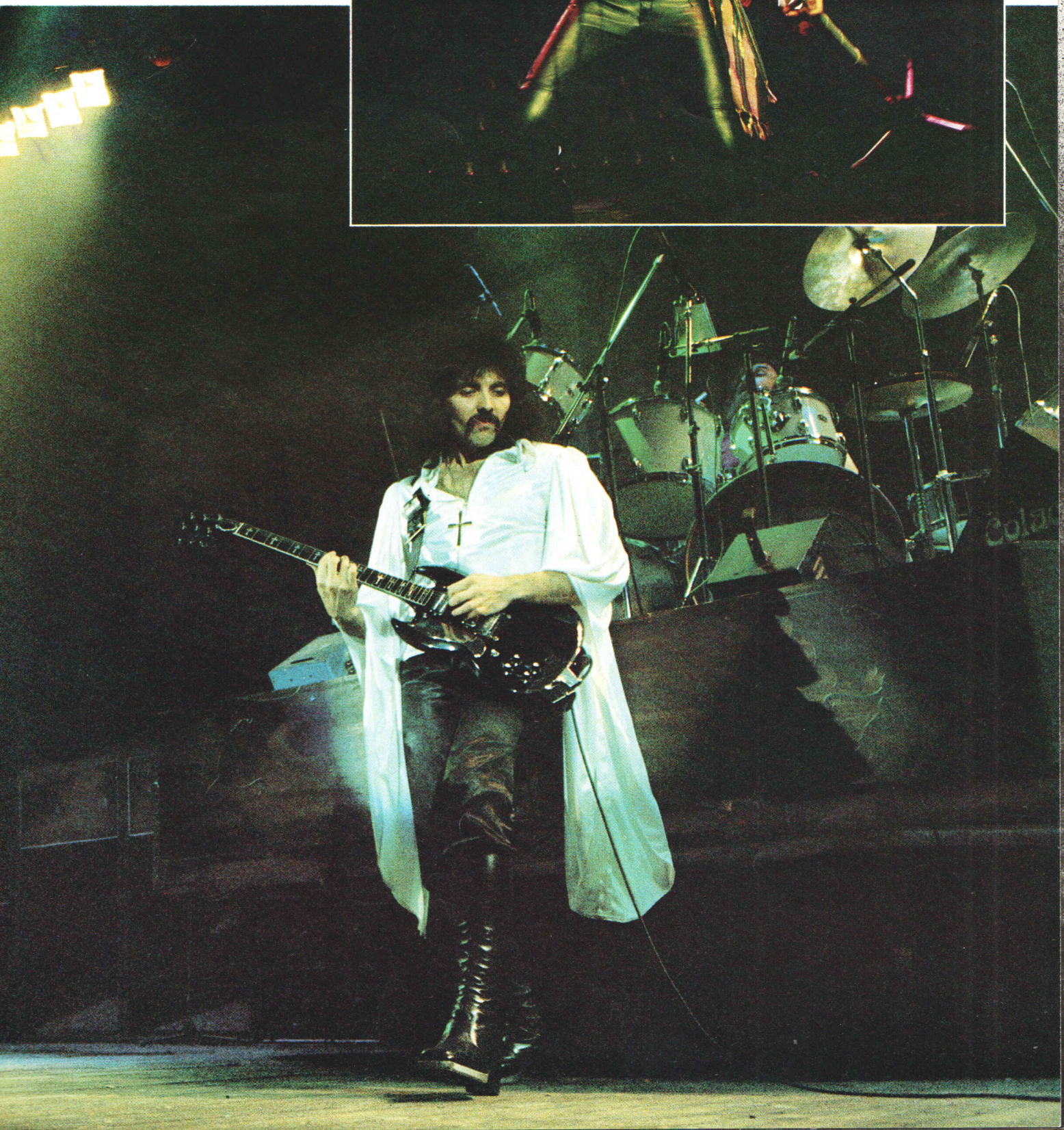
Although the beginning of 1983 saw Black Sabbath unsure of their future, the vitality that drove the group to worldwide

Below: The classic Black Sabbath line-up in action, from left Ozzy Osbourne, Geezer Butler, Tony Iommi and Bill Ward. Right: Ronnie Dio, who replaced the outrageous Ozzy as vocalist.

success in the early Seventies had left its mark. For several years, Black Sabbath were *the* heavy metal band, and 'Paranoid' was *the* heavy metal anthem; their ponderous, doomy rock and sinister visual image was a crucial influence on new heavy-metal bands like Samson, Iron Maiden and Saxon. LUKE CRAMPTON

Black Sabbath
Recommended Listening

We Sold Our Souls For Rock'n'Roll (NEMS NELD 101) (Includes: Paranoid, War Pigs, Children Of The Grave, Snowblind, Sabbath Bloody Sabbath, The Wizard).



Rock's fatal fascination with black magic

SYMPATHY FOR The Devil

IN THE SPRING of 1982 Jaz, a member of the apocalyptic post-punk group Killing Joke, was unexpectedly absent from a scheduled television appearance. He had suddenly decided to visit Iceland. Not, so it was reported, because he had been seized with an uncontrollable urge to see the volcanic plains and boiling geysers of that barren and thinly populated island. But because his researches into psychic and occult prophecies had convinced him that some great catastrophe was about to strike the earth. Iceland, for mysterious and unexplained reasons, was likely to escape the worst effects of the coming disaster. The expected calamity did not, of course, take place (the only upheaval occurring within the ranks of Killing Joke). Nevertheless, Jaz's belief in the truth of at least *some* occult prophecies remained unshaken. Clearly, at least one rock musician has an unshakeable faith in things psychic and their value as a guide to everyday activity.

Hex appeal

Such a concern with the supernatural and its interaction with the world in which we carry on our ordinary lives is a continuation of a long-established tradition. There have always been musicians – rock and otherwise – who have been influenced by and concerned with unorthodox fringe religions: the occult, the spells and charms of ritual magic, and even voodoo.

Both Bob Marley and Jimi Hendrix were influenced by Akonidi Hini – sometimes inaccurately referred to as 'high priestess of voodoo'. She is a Ghanaian occultist and president of the African Psychic and Traditional Healers Association, who usually carries out her religious and magical rites in her private temple, a ramshackle building situated beside her homeland's River Zribi. Hendrix was sufficiently impressed with Akonidi's occult powers to dedicate his 'Voodoo Chile' to her, and she believed her 'magic' to be partly responsible for his success.

Akonidi continues to take an interest in all types of black music and, if a record particularly appeals to her, will carry out rituals designed to achieve its commercial success. In 1982, for example, she underwent a 'three-day spiritual fast' to bless Eddy Grant's UK chart-topping single 'I Don't Wanna Dance'.

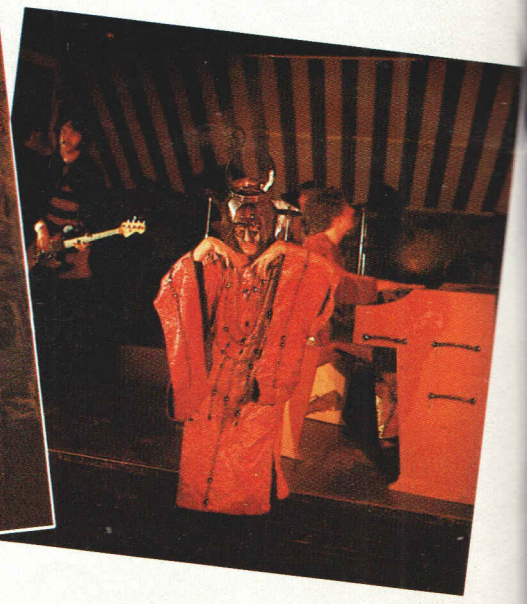
During the decade from 1965 to 1975 there was much experimentation by musicians with allegedly consciousness-expanding drugs – from laboratory-made LSD and STP to such traditional Amerindian 'spirit medicines' as peyote and magic mushrooms. Many of the rock stars who experimented with these and similar substances did so purely for kicks. But others were genuinely seeking mystical experiences.

While some musicians were carrying out drug experiments designed to 'loosen the girders of the soul', that is, to force their way into the world of the psychic (or into the depths of their own unconscious minds) by chemical short-cuts, others were using more traditional methods to achieve the same results. They spent long hours in meditation, practised yoga, studied astrology and other traditional symbol systems, and even experimented with ritual magic. This last technique always invites a bad press. Horror films, Dennis Wheatley novels and Sunday newspaper exposures of occult eccentrics have given the impression that all practitioners of ritual magic spend their time sacrificing virgins in honour of imaginary and meaningless gods. Believers contend that authentic ritual magic is the 'yoga of the West', a combination of mental and physical techniques designed to produce deep and beneficial changes in the minds and bodies of those who practise it (whatever else it does to others).

It is not surprising that many rock musicians have been concerned with the supernatural, for occult elements were present in many of rock's musical ancestors and some of those who pre-dated contemporary rock associated themselves with the world of demons, devils and other denizens of hell. Blues singer 'Peetie Wheatstraw' (William Bunch) boasted of his close relationship to Satan, calling himself 'The Devil's Son-in-Law and High Sheriff of Hell', while Robert Johnson, the brilliant blues guitarist and singer, believed that the Devil was ever-active in the modern world and sang convincingly of 'the Hell Hound on my trail'. The R&B songs of Willy Dixon, meanwhile, are directly concerned with occult spells, charms and magic plants – such as 'High John the Conqueror'.

The use of 'High John' seems to have originated in Louisiana but, curiously enough, the artist who has most referred to it in his work is white – Mac Rebennack, a former session musician better known as Dr John the Night Tripper. The references in many of Dr John's lyrics to 'goofer dust' and 'drawing powder' are only understandable in the context of New Orleans voodoo-witchcraft. 'Goofer dust' is earth taken from a freshly dug grave, and it is

Below, left to right: Killing Joke, Black Widow and Arthur Brown. All have projected an 'occult' image, as did US hard-rockers Blue Öyster Cult (right).



believed that some occultists know secret methods of using it by which they can kill or injure their enemies. 'Drawing powder' is more innocent, usually consisting of powdered lodestone or magnetised iron filings that have been subjected to magical processes believed to confer the power of 'drawing' love, money or good luck to its owner. It is difficult to know how seriously Dr John took the voodoo of which he sang. Possibly he just used occult concepts to provide structural frameworks for the remarkable albums he released.

Tongue-in-cheek use of the supernatural for theatrical effect has been quite common. It is, for example, difficult to believe in the seriousness of either Arthur Brown – 'I am the God of Hellfire' – or Screamin' Jay Hawkins, who, juggling with a skull like some demented Hamlet, was accustomed to have himself carried on stage in a blazing coffin.

A similar doubt surrounds the motives of Black Widow, the rock group which in 1970 recorded *Sacrifice*, once described as 'the purest Satanic rock album'. Certainly Satanism is predominant – the listener is told of 'a way to power', urged to come to the Witches' Sabbat, and given much information about the 'Secret Art'. And yet the impression made on most of those who have listened to the album is of a self-conscious stage performance – the soundtrack of a Hammer horror film rather than the authentic voice of devil worship.

Sabbath rites

Two famous British heavy-metal bands have been associated with the black arts. In the earlier part of their career Black Sabbath displayed a seemingly genuine, and certainly chilling concern with Satan and his works. They began each concert with an eerie and sometimes long drawn-out occult ceremony, which seems to have been derived from a *grimoire*, one of the many textbooks of ritual magic circulated among the occultists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. So authentic-seeming was this rite that the group was approached by Alex Sanders, 'the King of the Witches', at the time chief of a whole network of occult societies, who warned them that they were in danger of raising forces beyond their power to control.

Whether Black Sabbath took Sanders' advice seriously or not, there is no doubt that they subsequently played down the Satanic aspect of their music. Indeed, it has been argued that the band's vision of Satanism was *cautionary*. As Andrew Weiner commented in 'Doom Patrol' (an article in *Rock File 2*): '. . . they took a stand *against* black magic. Their songs warned against it. They used to wear those crucifixes to fend off evil spirits.'

The rock musician who has made the deepest study of the occult in general, and of ritual magic in particular, is undoubtedly Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin. Page became fascinated by the life and occult teachings of Aleister Crowley, the self-styled 'Beast 666'. Crowley believed that he was the prophet of a new age of 'Force and Fire', in which Christianity would be replaced by 'Crowleyanity', a religion of his own devising. Whether Page believed in this strange magical religion is uncertain; certainly he was sufficiently impressed by Crowley's faith to make a profound study of his occult teachings and to buy Boleskine House, once Crowley's home. When a series of tragedies befell the members of Led Zeppelin in the late Seventies and early Eighties – including the deaths of drummer John Bonham and one of Page's friends at one of his other houses – the wisdom of the guitarist's occultist interests were seriously questioned.

It would be foolish, however, to make any sinister inferences about the fatalities. Rather, it is more realistic to view the flirtation of rock stars like Page with the occult as one of the taboo indulgences made available by the rock lifestyle, much like excessive drug-taking and drinking (the latter of which was the cause of Bonham's death). Meanwhile, the occult has offered the type of evil imagery and theatrical possibilities that rock audiences, especially those of heavy-metal bands, have always found fascinating (sword-and-sorcery mythology has a similar appeal) and which, for the most part, provide little more than harmless escapism.

FRANCIS KING

TEN YEARS AFTER

TEN YEARS AFTER

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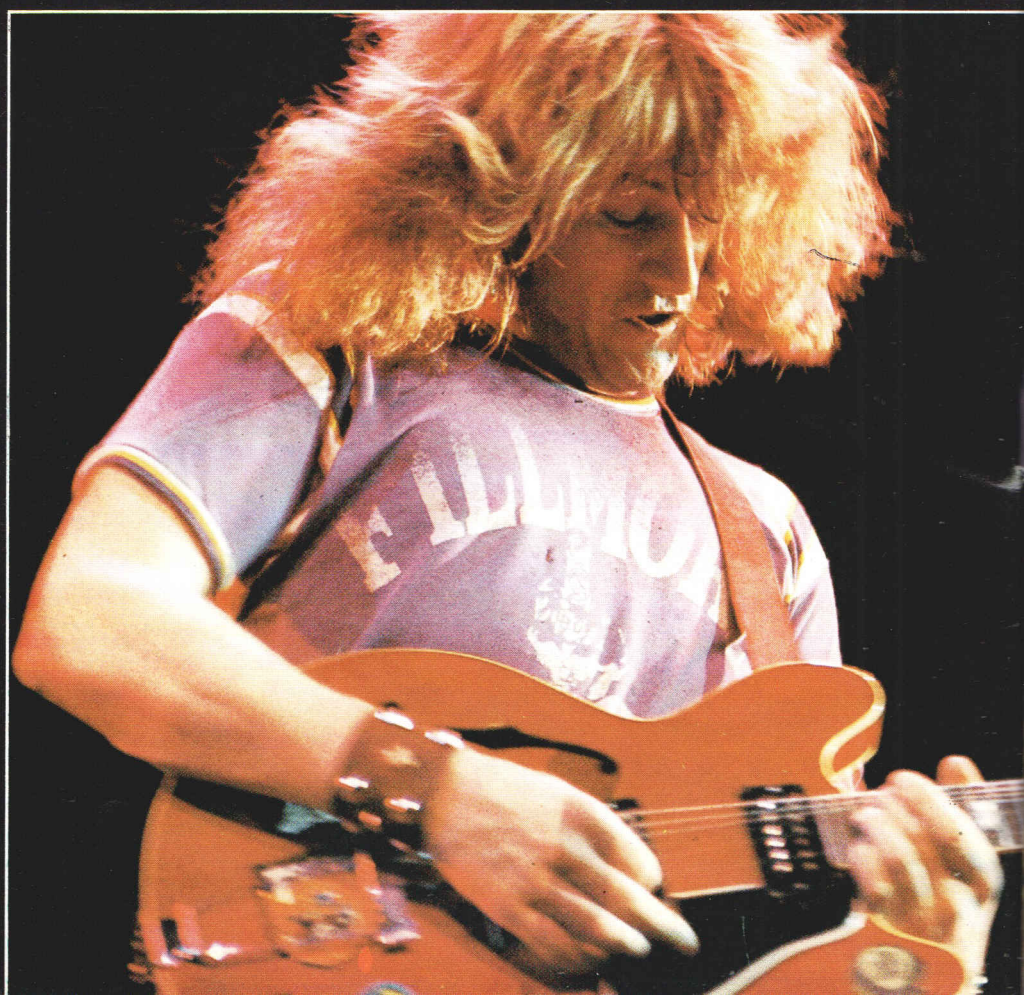
High-octane rock from Alvin Lee and the boys

FORMED IN 1967, Ten Years After emerged as part of the late-Sixties British blues boom, becoming a big-selling album act and premier live attraction – particularly on the emergent American stadium circuit – before their break-up in 1974. The star of their act was singer/guitarist Alvin Lee, probably the flashiest blues/rock guitarist of the lot.

Jaybirds of a feather

Lee, born in Nottingham on 19 December 1944, grew up in a musical environment – both his parents played guitar. After taking lessons for a year, he joined his first local group at the age of 13. A couple of years later he paired up with bassist Leo Lyons (born 30 November 1944) and they played together in various line-ups, one of which took them to Hamburg in Germany, before meeting drummer Ric Lee (born 20 October 1945). The three of them formed the nucleus of a band called the Jaybirds. Chick Churchill (born 2 January 1946) was initially given a job as road manager of this outfit, but soon began to make a more direct contribution as organist.



In 1967 the group decided on a change of name to Ten Years After, and swiftly established a strong reputation in the London clubs – most notably at the Marquee, where they held down a residency. At this point, they met Chris Wright, who became their manager (and later, with Terry Ellis, formed Chrysalis Records). With Wright's help, they secured a contract with Decca Records who, perceiving the band's underground as opposed to commercial appeal, assigned them to their new progressive label Deram and allowed them to release an album, *Ten Years After*, without the customary requirement of a hit single. The album sold reasonably well and during the rest of the year Ten Years After played as many gigs as they possibly could, further establishing their grass-roots following in Britain.

General Lee

In 1968, Deram released a second album, *Undead*, recorded live at London's Klook's Kleek club. American promoter Bill Graham, impressed with the album, telegrammed Chris Wright inviting Ten Years After to play at the prestigious Fillmore West, and the band departed for what was to be the first of numerous Stateside tours.

Although the two 1969 albums, *Stonedhenge* (on which Lee's guitar work was uncharacteristically subdued) and *Ssssh* (a heavier, more fully produced effort), established them in the British charts, it was *Undead* that conveyed most accurately what the band was about – high-energy, high-velocity performance rock, as raw and unsubtle as it comes. Despite the fact that Ric Lee, Leo Lyons and Chick Churchill were all extremely capable musicians, each having had more formal training than Alvin Lee, it was very much the guitarist's show.

Alvin Lee (above and below left), lead guitarist with Ten Years After (left), was an early example of the rock 'axe hero'.

Alvin Lee sang, wrote nearly all the songs and produced the albums. On stage he was always the centre of attention. A tall, well-built figure, with scowling face and thick blond hair, he quickly became renowned for the incredible speed with which he played his familiar sticker-festooned red Gibson 335. His guitar playing came to dominate proceedings to such an extent that Churchill would often leave his keyboards – which were drowned by the guitar – to stand on a stack at the back of the stage and clap his hands impotently in the air. For a while audiences loved Ten Years After's show, particularly in America, but the critical response was less favourable.

The situation crystallised with Ten Years After's appearance at the Woodstock Festival in 1969 and subsequent inclusion in the film of the event, which became a worldwide box-office success in 1970. *Woodstock* featured the band storming, stomping and wailing their way through an Alvin Lee song called 'I'm Going Home' – an extended shuffle/boogie 12-bar that tended towards indulgence when taken out of context with the rest of the show. But the effect of that appearance was dramatic – the band was suddenly hoisted into a position of international superstar status. In Britain they were rewarded in June of 1970 with their only hit single, an edited version of 'Love Like A Man', but Lee didn't care for the number and refused to play it on 'Top Of The Pops'. Meanwhile *Cricklewood Green* (1970) and *Watt* (1971) both reached the Top Five in the album charts.

Ironically, Woodstock also heralded the start of Ten Years After's decline. 'It was a big break, but it was the start of the end too,' said Alvin Lee. They found themselves in an artistic strait-jacket, hedged in on the one side by audiences demanding nothing but the formula of 'I'm Going Home' and 'Good Morning Little Schoolgirl', and on the other by critics lambasting their lack of finesse and paucity of imagination. Moreover, the band suffered from a work schedule that left them little time to draw breath, let alone write new songs and develop in any new directions. Alvin Lee commented: 'We just kept working and working and working . . . and the fun went out of it. We didn't feel we were achieving anything particularly, it was just what I call the travelling jukebox syndrome. Get on stage, plug in, and away you go – do the same as you did last night.' It has been reliably documented that Ten Years After undertook as many as 28 American tours, as well as appearing all over Europe.

Bad vibrations

The band's last new album, *Positive Vibrations*, was released in the spring of 1974, but Ten Years After had already split, having played their last British gig at London's Rainbow earlier that year. They did, however, undertake a final American tour in 1975, and got together briefly in the studio in early 1977, though no recordings were ever released from these sessions.

Alvin Lee embarked on a solo career with mixed results. He worked initially with Mylon LeFevre, producing the country-rock-flavoured *On The Road To Freedom* (1973), and then set up a nine-piece touring band – casting himself in a more 'tasteful', laid-back role. But his new image suited neither his audience nor himself, and it wasn't too long before he was back in the heavy-rock fold. In late 1977 he formed Ten Years Later in response to record company pressures, but after two lacklustre albums they split, and since then he has again worked solo, using a three-piece Alvin Lee Band – with bassist Fuzzy Samuels and drummer Tom Compton – for touring.

Leo Lyons became a producer, working most notably on a trio of UFO albums, and eventually setting up a studio in Oxfordshire. Ric Lee did a spell with Stan Webb's Chicken Shack before moving into management, while Chick Churchill recorded a solo album, *You And Me* (1973), before joining Chrysalis Publishing.

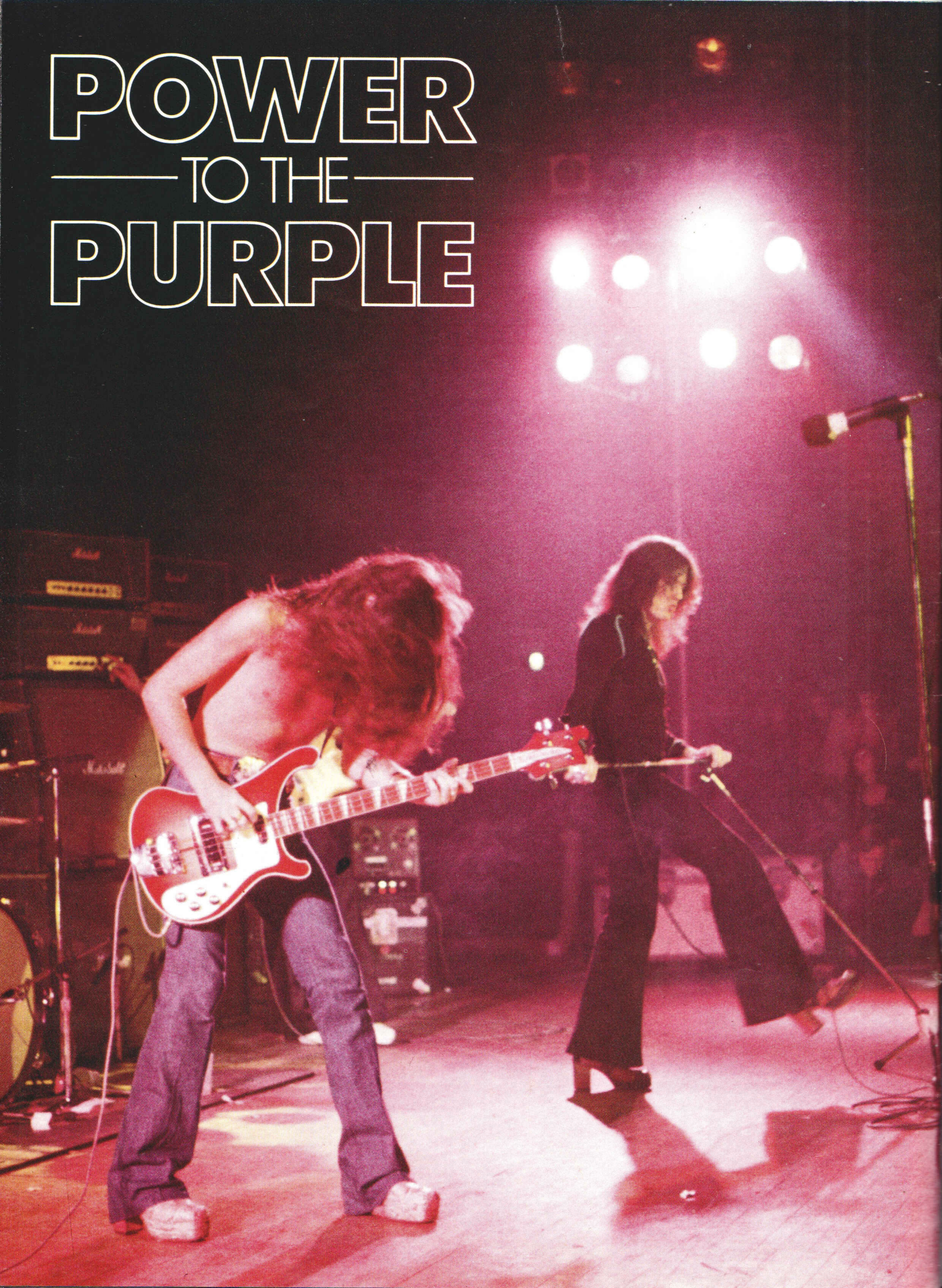
Perhaps Ten Years After failed to take a firm enough stand against the many pressures that boxed them in, and perhaps they should have established a stronger musical identity as a band, rather than as a vehicle for Lee's greased-lightning guitar. But whatever their detractors may say, they worked long and hard, and gave many an audience one hell of a buzz.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Ten Years After
Recommended Listening

Hear Me Calling (Decca TAB 12) (Includes: Hear Me Calling, I'm Going Home, Spoonful, No Title, Help Me, Feel It For Me).

POWER TO THE PURPLE



Classic hard rock in shades of Deep Purple

'Deep Purple came into being in February 1968, and they promptly moved into the wilds of Hertfordshire, wisely choosing to isolate themselves for two months while they argued out their musical policy and knocked the musical splinters from the surface of their act.

'Basically Jon Lord and Ritchie Blackmore were responsible for Deep Purple's existence. They roped in drummer Ian Paice and later added Ian Gillan and Roger Glover as replacements for their departing singer and bassist.'

Thus reads the official record of the first 18 months in the career of Deep Purple. The quote comes from a press release sent out at the end of 1969 to mark the group's first excursion into 'serious' music, Jon Lord's 'Concerto For Group And Orchestra'. Formed at the end of the Sixties and contemporaries of Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, Deep Purple must be bracketed with those bands as among the most successful and influential of the Seventies.

The events surrounding the band's formation were, however, somewhat more complicated than that press release had indicated. Chris Curtis, formerly drummer with the Searchers, had forsaken the drumkit for the microphone and wished to put together a group to back his vocal talents. Around the end of 1967 he persuaded two London businessman, Tony Edwards and John Coletta, to provide him with the financial backing. Only two musicians – keyboard-player Jon Lord and bassist Nicky Simper – had been recruited when the eccentric Curtis dropped out of the project in the spring of 1968, but Coletta and Edwards remained keen to invest in the music business and encouraged Lord and Simper to form a band of their own.

Beneath the covers

Lord, born in Leicester on 9 June 1941, was a classically trained keyboard-player. He had turned his back on music for three years to train as an actor at drama school before returning to music to 'save himself from complete starvation', as another early press release succinctly put it. In the early Sixties, he played with various jazz outfits before switching to beat and R&B with the Artwoods – the band set up by Ron Wood's brother Art – and, subsequently, the Riot Squad.

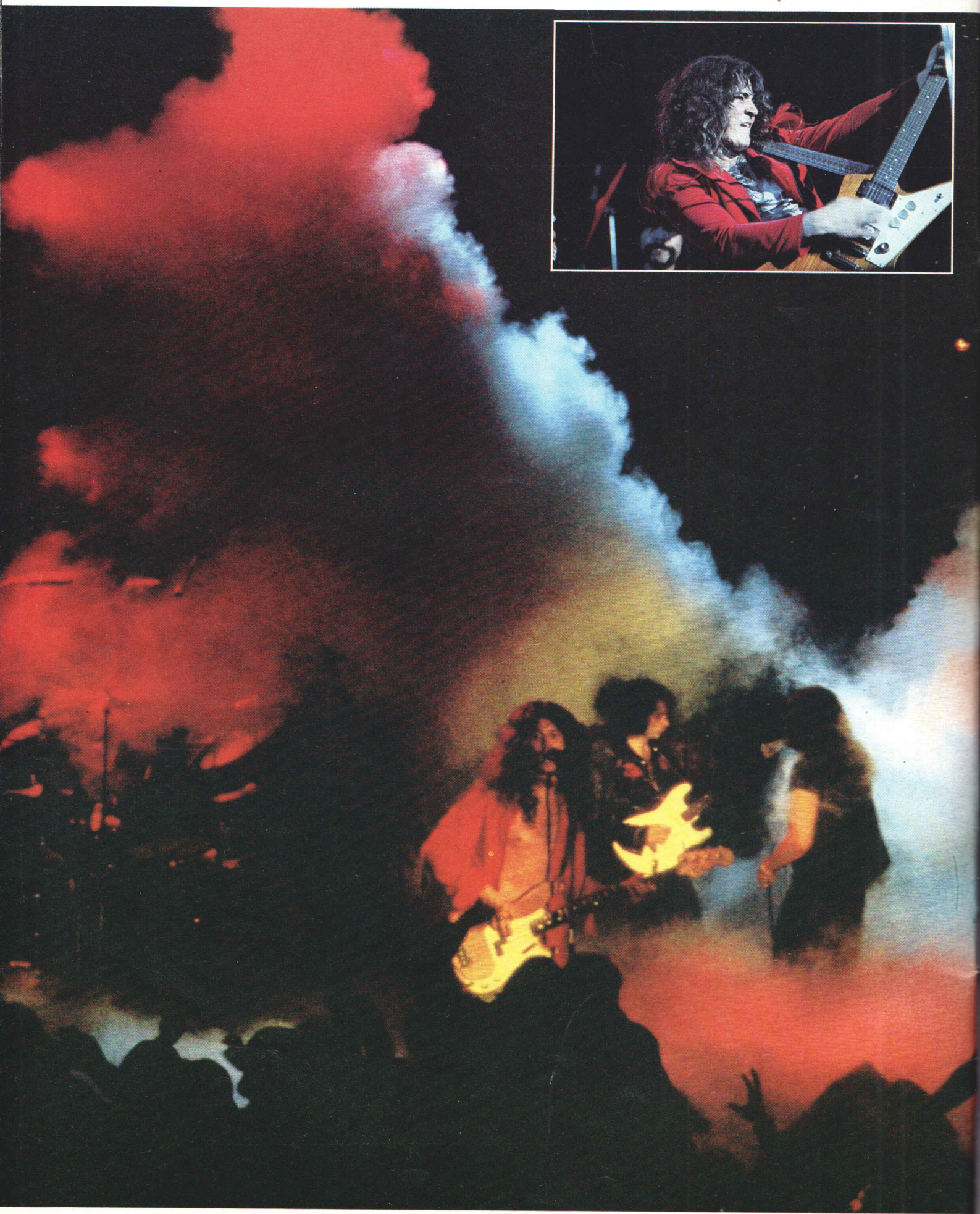
Simper, meanwhile, had served a spell as bass-player with Johnny Kidd and the Pirates – he was injured in the car crash that killed Kidd in October 1966 – before turning to session work. It was at a session in the summer of 1967, for the Flowerpot Men's 'Let's Go To San Francisco', that he met Jon Lord.

The first recruit for the duo's new group was Ritchie Blackmore. Born in Weston-Super-Mare on 14 April 1945, he had been a session guitarist since his mid-teens and had played with Nero and the Gladiators and Screaming Lord Sutch and the Savages among others. Drummer Ian Paice (born Hounslow, London, 29 June 1948) and vocalist Rod Evans were found through advertising in the music press.

Signed to EMI's Parlophone label, this first incarnation of Deep Purple was an instant success in the United States, where their records appeared on the Tetragrammaton label. 'Hush', a version of the Joe South song replete with Lord's churning organ and Blackmore's stinging guitar fills, was released on 21 June 1968 and reached Number 4 in the Hot Hundred three months later. Further singles successes followed with covers of Neil Diamond's 'Kentucky Woman' and Phil Spector's 'River Deep Mountain High', while the first three albums, *Shades Of Deep Purple* (1968), *The Book Of Taliesyn* and *Deep Purple* (both 1969) also sold well.

However, while US sales were good enough, the group's direction left much to be desired. The albums had been over-reliant on cover versions – 'Hey Joe', the Beatles' 'Help' and 'We Can Work It Out' and Donovan's 'Lalena' included – and, although Blackmore's impressively flamboyant style and Lord's churchy organ dominated proceedings, the overall sound

Above: The original Deep Purple, from left Ritchie Blackmore, Rod Evans, Ian Paice, Jon Lord and Nicky Simper. Below: The line-up after Ian Gillan (far right) and Roger Glover (right) joined. They were replaced by Glenn Hughes and David Coverdale (left), who entered the Purple fold in 1973.



of the band was at times embarrassingly weak. In the States Deep Purple were considered to be little more than a pop group, reasonably strong at doing cover versions but none too original, while they made minimal impact in their native Britain..

A re-structuring of the band was thought necessary, and Simper and Evans were sacked in the spring of 1969 – much to founder member Simper's annoyance. Speaking in 1975, he revealed his dissatisfaction: 'Evans and myself were just as important as the other three 'superstars' which explains why the band's career slumped to an all-time low in the US on our departure. Without Rod Evans and myself, Deep Purple would probably never have been and without those early hits they would certainly never have survived.' Nonetheless, the decision to oust the two seems valid in retrospect, for with the addition of vocalist Ian Gillan and bassist Roger Glover the band began to assume a heavier rock identity.

The rock machine

Gillan, born in Hounslow on 19 August 1945, and Glover, born in Brecon on 30 November 1945, had been through a variety of obscure semi-pro bands before finally linking in a pop outfit called Episode Six, from which they were recruited to Deep Purple. Gillan proved to be an inspired choice because of his remarkably powerful and distinctive voice, while Glover's imaginative bass-lines and sheer precision helped to move Purple into harder rock territory. The breakthrough in Britain came with Lord's concerto, which received its public debut at the Royal Albert Hall in London on 24 September 1969. The orchestra was the Royal Philharmonic and the conductor Malcolm Arnold.

The concerto turned out to be something of a mixed bag – pleasant, classically derived themes intertwined with heavy riffs – but its Albert Hall debut was received with rapture.

In 1970, the band released *Deep Purple In Rock*, an album that established the Deep Purple formula – wailing, shrieking vocal work and extended instrumental pyrotechnics built around simple but rock-hard riffs. The album rapidly sold a million copies, while the band also assailed the pop charts with the commercial heavy metal of 'Black Night', which rose to Number 2 in the UK in late September.

For the next couple of years Purple followed a gruelling work schedule. They were tied to a recording contract that demanded two albums a year and, at the same time, were gigging constantly all over the world.

At the same time rumours were flying thick and fast about the impending dissolution of the band, with the mercurial and short-tempered Ritchie Blackmore as the prime contender for departure. He openly lashed the band's next album *Fireball* (1971) and midway through 1972, with *Machine Head* at the top of the LP charts, he was predicting that Purple would do one more album and then fold up.

Left: Armageddon in Purple – the band hit Paris. Inset: Tommy Bolin, Blackmore's replacement, died tragically young.

At the time, he said 'I think there's room for more excitement in today's music and I want to do something about it. I think I can do something more exciting than Deep Purple. Although we are all good musicians in Purple we are limited to certain things. It's hard to write hard riffs all the time. I don't think we can get much bigger than we are at the moment and it's a nice position to be in but it can't last forever.'

Surprisingly, however, it was the new boys, Gillan and Glover, who decided to leave midway through 1973. Gillan had actually handed in his notice in 1972, but was persuaded to remain for a spell because of the band's enormous success in the States. When he actually made his decision public – after the music press had erroneously 'revealed' that Blackmore and Ian Paice were to leave – three of the band's albums, *Machine Head, Made In Japan* (1972) and *Who Do We Think We Are?* (1973), had become million-sellers in America.

A combination of Gillan's own business interests and heightening differences of opinion about musical direction – plus personality clashes between Gillan and Blackmore – had led the singer to quit. He had purchased a recording studio with the profits made from his (pre-Purple) participation in the *Jesus Christ Superstar* album, which had become an enormous success, and intended to concentrate on this new venture.

Within a few weeks of Gillan's departure from Purple – and press speculation of ex-Free vocalist Paul Rodgers coming in on vocals – Roger Glover quit to become head of A&R for Purple Records, the band's own label. He continued to record his own material, however, including 1974's *Butterfly Ball*, a terrible mish-mash of an album which had been inspired by the drawings of Alan Aldridge. Glover's replacement in Deep Purple was Glenn Hughes, a comparative youngster who had been with the highly-talented trio Trapeze for the previous three years. The replacement for Gillan was much more surprising – the totally unknown David Coverdale.

'I was working in a clothes shop in Redcar and I was playing in semi-pro bands at nights – world-famous bands like the Fabulosa Brothers,' Coverdale recalled in a later interview. 'I heard that Purple wanted a new singer so I was conceited enough to think I might stand a chance. I sent a tape and I was astonished when I got the message that they wanted to see me. When I actually got the job I couldn't speak.'

One of Coverdale's first professional dates with the band was at the California Jam in 1973, where the band headlined in front of some three-quarters of a million people. With Blackmore revealing his in-

famous temper by trashing a highly expensive TV camera and with a stunt involving exploding amps going so wrong that the stage was set ablaze, it was very much a baptism of fire for Coverdale.

During 1974 and the first half of the following year the third Deep Purple line-up recorded two further albums, *Burn* and *Stormbringer*. Then in mid 1975 Blackmore finally left to form Rainbow. For a while it appeared that his departure would signal the end of Deep Purple. However, Coverdale and Hughes persuaded the somewhat reluctant Lord and Paice to keep the band going and introduced a new guitarist in American Tommy Bolin, formerly of the James Gang. Bolin made an immediate impression by composing much of the material for a new album, *Come Taste The Band* (1975).

All played out

The new LP saw the group departing somewhat from the formula of the last six years. Songs were shorter than on previous albums, while the music was less dependent on heavy riffs and instrumental dexterity, leaning more towards the R&B traditions of American hard rock than the bombastic ones of British heavy metal. But worthy though *Come Taste The Band* was, it proved to be the last gasp of a spent force.

In the middle of July 1976, it was announced that Deep Purple had folded. 'Having had so many personnel changes in the past eight years we felt that rather than rearrange yet again it would be better to stop while the going was good,' manager Rob Cooksey told the press. 'David resigned a couple of months ago and we decided that rather than chase every penny while the band was going downhill it would be better to call a halt.'

Glenn Hughes made his own solo album, *Play Me Out* (1977), disappeared into obscurity for some years, but resurfaced in 1982 with a new band called Hughes-Thrall. Paice and Lord teamed up with ex-Family keyboard-player Tony Ashton, guitarist Bernie Marsden from Babe Ruth and bass player Paul Martinez to form Paice, Ashton and Lord; they recorded one patchy album called *Malice In Wonderland* (1977) before splitting.

Coverdale recorded two solo albums, *Whitesnake* (1977) and *Northwinds* (1978), before setting up his own band, Whitesnake, which Jon Lord and Ian Paice joined in 1978. Tommy Bolin, meanwhile, had died of a drug overdose in Miami just six months after the end of Purple, cutting short a potentially dazzling solo career.

Eight years is not a particularly long career for a hard-rock band, and the number of upheavals and personnel changes that Purple suffered tends to obscure their collective significance. In their last three years they were the biggest rock band in the world – record sales testify to that fact – and at their peak they were a dynamic stage force and a remarkably talented band.

The fact that the members of Deep Purple spawned so many offshoots, did so many solo projects while still in the band and were mostly still active in the Eighties was a testament in itself to their thirst to make music and the depth of their musical ability. The frequency of press speculation as to a possible reunion – 'Deep Purple To Reform?' headlines abounded in the early Eighties – also spoke volumes for the loyalty of their fans that kept the legend alive long after the band had ceased to exist.

BRIAN HARRIGAN

DEEP PURPLE
Discography

Singles

Hush/One More Rainy Day (Parlophone 5708, 1968); Kentucky Woman/Wring That Neck (Parlophone 5754, 1968); Emmaretta/Wring That Neck (Parlophone 5763, 1969); Hallelujah/April Part One (Harvest HAR 5006, 1969); Black Night/Speed King (Harvest HAR 5020, 1970); Strange Kind Of Woman/I'm Alone (Harvest HAR 5033, 1971); Fireball/Demon's Eye (Harvest HAR 5054, 1971); Never Before/When A Blind Man Cries (Purple PUR 102, 1972); Might Just Take Your Life/Coronarias Redig (Purple PUR 117, 1974); You Keep On Moving/Love Child (Purple PUR 130, 1976); Smoke On The Water/Child In Time/Woman From Tokyo (Purple PUR 132, 1977).

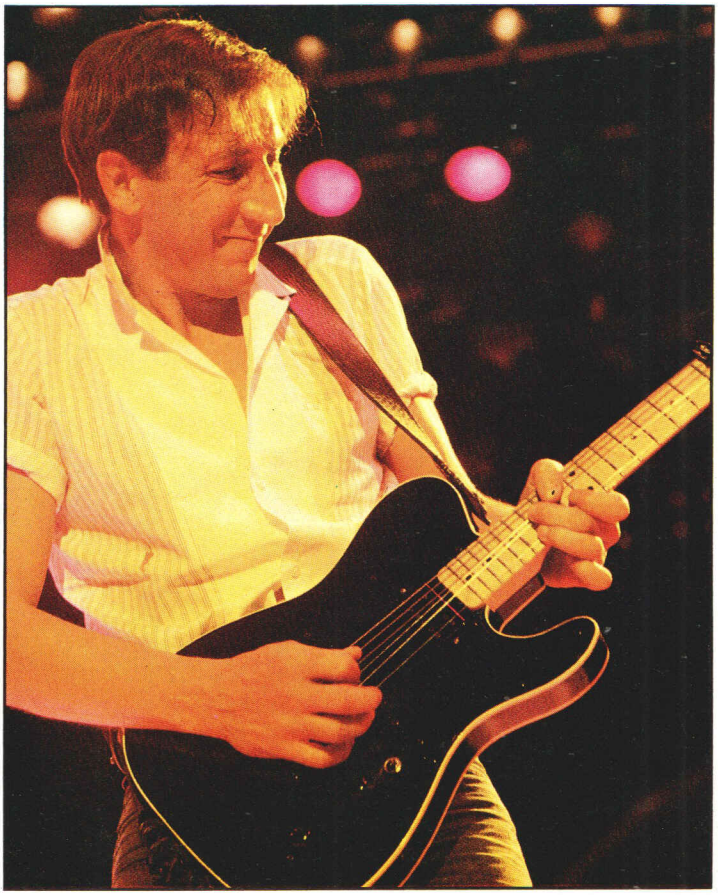
Albums (selective)

Shades Of Deep Purple (Parlophone PCS 7055, 1968); *The Book Of Taliesyn* (Harvest SHVL 751, 1969); *Deep Purple* (Harvest SHVL 759, 1969); *Concerto For Group And Orchestra* (Harvest SHVL 767, 1970); *In Rock* (Harvest SHVL 777, 1970); *Fireball* (Harvest SHVL 793, 1971); *Machine Head* (Purple Records TPSA 7504, 1972); *Made In Japan* (Purple Records TPS 351, 1972); *Who Do We Think We Are?* (Purple Records TPSA 7508, 1973); *Burn* (Purple Records TPS 3505, 1974); *Stormbringer* (Purple Records TPS 3508, 1974); *Come Taste The Band* (Purple Records TPSA 7515, 1975); *Deepest Purple* (Harvest EMTV 25, 1980); *In Concert 1970-72* (Harvest SHDW 412, 1980).

Above left: Lord of the keyboards. Below: Ritchie Blackmore's temper was notorious, often exploding on stage.

THE GREAT MUSICIANS

Pete Townshend



Above: Townshend favoured a Schecter Telecaster, custom-built from replacement components, for stage work in the Eighties. Overleaf: Pete plays a Gibson Les Paul fitted with an extra humbucking pick-up.

Although Pete Townshend may be remembered by the public as a manic boiler-suited guitarist who smashes Rickenbackers to bits, his fellow rock musicians will be more inclined to recall him as a deft rhythm guitarist, a pioneer in the use of feedback and an early and skilful manipulator of synthesisers.

Townshend has always admitted that he is no great shakes when it comes to playing lead guitar solos. Thus his guitar-playing role in the Who has been that of rhythmic heartbeat and metronomic timekeeper, his guitar chords cutting sharply against the thud and beat of the bass and drums backing him. His instrument-smashing routine evolved largely by accident, but was frequently to be repeated.

During an early performance, so legend has it, Townshend pushed the neck of his guitar into a club's low ceiling; the neck broke and so he decided to carry on and destroy the instrument completely. The crowd lapped up this act of on-stage savagery and so the wrecking of electric guitars soon became an expected part of the Who's performance. Pete must have tired quickly of this demand for him to recreate night after night what was originally an accident.

The son of a musician, the young Townshend acquired his first acoustic guitar – a gift from his grandmother – soon after he had started at Acton County Grammar School. He went on to learn banjo, too, playing briefly in a trad-jazz band that also included John Entwistle, a schoolfriend, along with Roger Daltrey. His first electric guitar was a Harmony, which was soon replaced by a solid Epiphone sold to him by Daltrey. But it was with Rickenbackers that Townshend came to be identified in the early days of the Who. At various times he played both six and 12-string Rickenbacker models.

Townshend has employed many guitars since then; a famous picture shows a wall in his flat bedecked with the remains of half-a-dozen or so smashed Rickenbackers, and he has claimed in an interview to have got through 'thousands' of guitars during his career. In 1967, for instance, he seemed to prefer Fenders, using a variety of models – a Stratocaster, a Telecaster and a Jazzmaster among them. Five years later the mainstays of his collection were an early Fifties Les Paul, and a 1957 Gretsch Chet Atkins given to him by Joe Walsh. He employed this orange Gretsch for a good deal of the electric work on 1971's *Who's Next* album.

Although Townshend claims that he has never been particularly fond of Gibson instruments, he has occasionally played a semi-acoustic 335, a Stereo, and a six-and-12-string double-necked model. Meanwhile, one of his favourite acoustic guitars is a big Gibson J200, and it was this that he used for the atmospheric opening changes of 'Pinball Wizard'. That introduction was based on an exploration of all the chords he could put together with a common B note running through them.

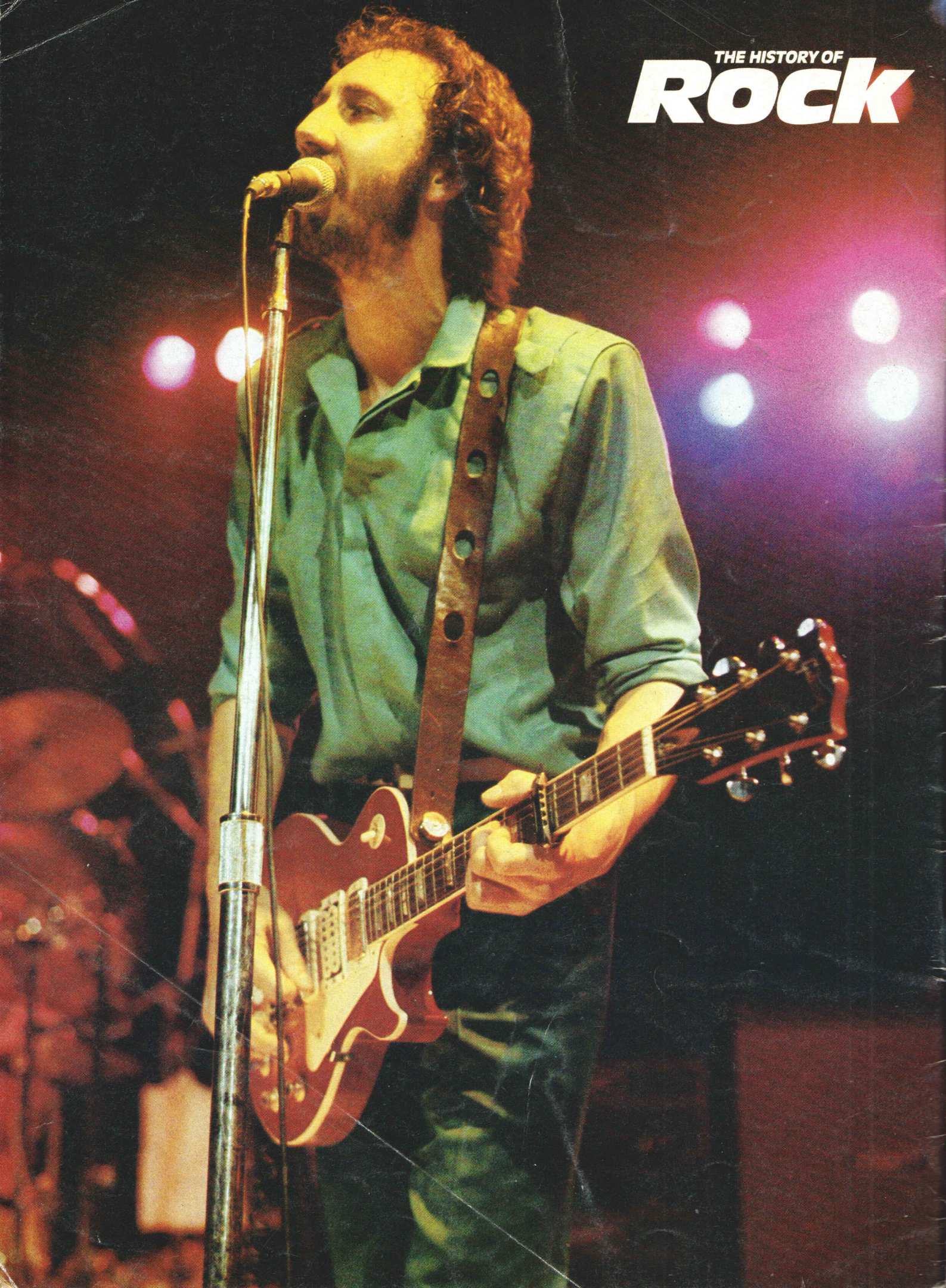
Townshend's amps have tended towards the stacked amp-and-cabinet set-up on stage (primarily Sound City in the early days, moving to Hiwatt later), while he has used all manner of amps and combos in the studio, including the highly-rated American Mesa Boogie combo. Through the interaction of the guitar's pickups and overdriven amplifiers, Townshend was one of the first guitarists to harness feedback and use it to musical advantage, as exemplified by 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere', the Who's second single, issued in May 1965.

But Townshend has always been an experimenter, and has maintained a fascination with the recording process that has led him to set up a series of home demo studios in his various flats and houses, culminating in his fully-equipped professional studio, Eel Pie Sound, which he sold in 1983. 'My Generation' was written on a train bound for Southampton; he started recording the song as soon as he returned to his Belgravia flat, double-tracking the guitar and adding vocals and bass. After a few further try-outs at Lansdowne Studio in London, the final released version was put down by the Who at IBC studios – stutters, bass solos, churning rhythm chords, feedback and all.

Townshend's musical curiosity also led him to tinker with synthesisers a decade before the electro-pop boom of the early Eighties – listen to his ground-breaking work on 'Baba O'Riley' and 'Won't Get Fooled Again' from *Who's Next*. Pete worked on his ARP keyboard synthesisers at his home studio to get the sound right, and was also one of the first guitarists to use a guitar to 'play' a synthesiser's filters (on 'Going Mobile', also from *Who's Next*), even though he wasn't satisfied with the result – he thought it sounded like a duck.

'I used to get terribly frustrated and compensate visually for what I couldn't achieve as a musician,' Townshend once commented. 'I tried to make playing the guitar look lethal.' He made it *sound* lethal, too, and his energetic, aggressive style proved a major influence on guitarists from the Mod era of the mid Sixties to the punk generation of the following decade.

TONY BACON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